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COMMENTS KEYED TO DCI MEMORANDUM TO DDCI
DATED 10 MAY 1977, PROMOTION POLICY

I. Annual Written Published Criteria for Selection

The Agency regulation on promotion, [] was recently revised, and includes an expanded statement relative to promotion policy in the Agency. In summary, promotion is based on merit, is normally the result of comparative evaluation of employees in a particular grade or function, with assessment consideration based on certain specific elements. Among the elements to be used in the selection or ranking process are: qualifications for the higher level of responsibility, performance providing insight relating to advancement potential, performance in tasks graded at a higher level of responsibility, personal qualities. We believe this criteria embodies the best of current experienced and professional personnel management philosophy/opinion for ranking and promotion of employees.

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Agency policy requires at least an annual review of all employees in a grade or discipline. The Head of a Career Service (i.e., Deputy Director or Head of the E Career Service) may establish the whole service as a competitive area for promotion or may establish separate areas within the Career Service, as necessary, because of differences in occupation or functional lines of work. As an example, the DDO comprises one competitive area and all personnel in specific grades compete in the respective promotion exercises. In the DDA, the individual subgroups such as Personnel, Logistics, Communications, are established as separate competitive areas. Most of the Career Service or Career Service subgroups panels or boards are established on a grade basis. The timing of the ranking and promotion reviews is decided by the individual Services, most keyed to the Fitness Report cycle. An annual guidance from the DCI would coincide with only a few of the exercises.

However, we believe it would be very pertinent at this time for the Director to issue an Employee Bulletin advising employees of the new promotion regulation, (as well as the separation regulations noted in para III below) endorsing adherence to the policy stated in [] and advising managers of their responsibilities in these areas.

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Heads of the Career Services should be asked to review the ranking and promotion criteria or guidances published in their respective Personnel Handbooks to insure it is in conformance with the newly published regulatory policy.

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II. Selection by Promotion Panels or Boards

One result of the personnel management study of 1973/74 (PASG) is a requirement for the use of Panels or Boards for the ranking and evaluation of professional personnel and the establishment of uniform ranking criteria, [REDACTED] The promotion regulation requires the comparative evaluation of personnel in grades GS-9 through GS-15 at least annually through the mechanism of Career Boards or Panels unless another mechanism, such as an Assessment Center, is approved by the Director of Personnel. Employees in grades GS-8 and below may be evaluated for the purpose of promotion at any time considered appropriate by the Head of the Career Service, but it must be at least annually. The use of comparative evaluation is recommended where feasible.

While present Agency policy requires the use of Panels and Boards for comparative ranking of personnel, the regulations do not require the promotion selection or nomination process be a responsibility of such bodies. In some Career Services or subgroups the Panel or Board does produce the proposed selection lists; in others management makes the selection/recommendation. If uniformity in this process is desired, it is suggested consideration be given to requiring the Panels and Boards in all Career Services have the responsibility for compiling the recommended list for promotion as an end result of the comparative ranking exercise. Because such groups will not always have the full scope of management's concern nor the impact of the recommended actions of related Panels or Boards, the selection recommendations should be reviewed and endorsed by the Head of the Career Service or Head of Career Service subgroup, as appropriate to the grade or function under consideration.

In this connection, it is noted that the structure of the Panels and Boards differs among the Career Services. The DDO convenes a new group for each exercise and each grade; some Career Services assign personnel to Panels and Boards for established tours of one to three years, with a rotating membership to insure continuity. In other Services, the membership is based on the position occupied rather than the selection of an individual person.

III. Mandatory Selection for Termination of Lower Percentiles

A revised regulation, [REDACTED] on involuntary separations has recently been published. It establishes uniform policies for the Agency, requiring Career Boards or Panels with ranking responsibility to identify those employees who are ranked in the lower 3 percent of all employees by either grade or function. Those so identified are referred to the Head of the Career Service for review and final determination as to the appropriateness of the selection, and type of action to be taken . . . i.e., counseling, reassignment, downgrade, or termination. The Head of a Career Service may remove individuals from this ranking when it is determined notification and/or administrative action is not warranted.

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IV. Special "Hump" Selection Out

As a general rule, the DDI and DDS&T have a severe problem at the upper grades because the senior executives are relatively young and because very few employees are covered by CIARDS, which has both earlier voluntary retirement and earlier mandatory retirement. As a result attrition rates are low and employees at senior levels must wait a long time for promotion. In the DDS&T, the average time in grade for an officer promoted is as follows: to GS-18 - 97 months, GS-17 - 72 months, GS-16 - 87 months. Comparable waits in the DDA are 60, 45, and 48, respectively.*

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The DDO has a different problem. It has a large number of relatively old officers at the level of GS 14-16 who are not exercising their privilege of early retirement. At those grades, there are officers of age 50 or more (out of in the Agency as a whole). Of course many of these older officers in other Directorates are not covered by CIARDS. As a result of this concentration, and the slow outflow, the average time-in-grade for DDO officers promoted is: to GS-16 - 53 months, GS-15 - 79 months, and GS-14 - 63 months. The average waits for promotion to GS-14 and GS-15 are the longest of any Directorate.

The various Directorates have paid some attention to "fast tracking" whereby promising and qualified younger officers are moved rapidly to greater responsibility. During FY 1976, 30 of the officers promoted to GS 14-16 were fewer than 2 years in grade and the Agency now has nearly 400 officers in those grades under age 40.

The Agency has several tools that can be applied to alleviate those personnel problems that arise from slow outflow and poor age distributions. Each of these has distinct limitations and problems.

(1) Voluntary Retirement. More of those employees who are eligible may be persuaded to take retirement if they have better hope of finding a second employment than they now appear to have. Super-grades currently would like to build up their "High 3".

*FY 1976 time-in-grade data from APP.

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STATINTL (2) Surplus Separation. Where there are too many employees in a grade or function, employees may be separated according to the procedures in [] Should the avowed purpose be to move up younger employees, there may be a basis for an age discrimination complaint.

STATINTL (3) Selection Out. Employees identified as low-ranked in the evaluation rankings may be separated under the procedures of [] These procedures specify low-ranking in two consecutive years and provide a fair amount of protection to the employee.

STATINTL (4) Use of Director's authority to downgrade supergrades [] provides that an employee will hold supergrade rank for such time as the Director may determine).

Though the blockage problems may focus attention on the higher grades and retirement-eligible employees, good management practice dictates a concentrated look at the employees who have been with the Agency fewer than 5 years and have a better opportunity to find the right career if the Agency is not for them. At the present time, of course, such younger employees are a scarce commodity, but the Agency can and should be highly selective.

V. Publication of Selection Lists

With the exception of a few Career Service subgroups, promotion lists are not published. We understand, however, several offices have such a procedure under consideration. This can be made a requirement for all the Career Services, though we believe publication should be within the subgroup or office concerned rather than published Agency or Career Service wide. Where the Career Service has not established subgroups, publication would of course be to the Directorate as a whole.

VI. Approval of Selection Lists by the DCI vice Deputy Directors

Current Agency procedures require the Director of Personnel's approval for the promotion actions submitted by the various Career Services. This normally involves Office of Personnel's review of the most recent Fitness Report and the grade and title of the slot or position occupied. In FY 76, including the transitional quarter, [] of all Agency personnel were promoted, [] were for GS-08 and above. Rather than require DCI review of all promotion selections, we would recommend he limit his approval to the more senior grade levels. Consideration could be given to reviewing the GS-13 through GS-15 lists, the base group for the PDP selections, or alternatively review only the GS-14 to GS-15 actions, the feeder group for the supergrade level. Supergrade and above promotions are currently approved by the DCI. The APP statistics for the 15 month FY 76 indicate the GS-13 to 15 review would have involved [] actions; the review STATINTL

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of only the GS-14 to GS-15 promotions would have involved ☐ actions. A return to the normal 12 month fiscal year will, of course, reduce the numbers, though not significantly. Only three or four subgroups had promotion exercises, in grades above GS-12, which would have been run twice in the FY 76 time frame.

The evaluation for the promotion of employees to supergrade rank, or within the supergrade structure, is accomplished semiannually, in the Spring and fall of the year. The Heads of the Career Services submit requests for promotion to the Director of Personnel who advises the Inspector General, the Director of Security and the Director of Medical Services. Each of these officials reviews the record and institutes such investigation as may be appropriate to determine the fitness of the individual being considered. The Director of Personnel upon receipt of the information from these concerned offices forwards the proposed action, with a recommendation, to the DCI for appropriate action.

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